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TO RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE IMMEDIATE 4732
INFO ORG FOR SECURITY CO OP IN EUR COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS STATE 112713

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: OSCE/PERMANENT COUNCIL: RESPONSE TO REPORT BY
HEAD OF MISSION TO MOLDOVA

11. Post is authorized to present the following statement at
the October 23 Permanent Council meeting in Vienna.

Begin text:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is a pleasure to welcome Ambassador Remler to the
Permanent Council today. His report bears witness to the
continuing energy and focus of the OSCE Mission to Moldova,
and highlights efforts to resolve the Transnistria conflict
and promote democratic progress.

The United States recognizes the Mission's important
contributions to resolving the Transnistria conflict. Under
the leadership of Special Envoy Talvitie, the 3 2 mediators
and observers have worked diligently to resume talks in the
5 2 format, the only appropriate mechanism for a transparent
and enduring settlement supported by the parties, the
neighbors, and the international community. Regrettably, the
Transnistrian side declined to attend a 5 2 meeting scheduled
for early October. It is our hope that all participants soon
will return to the negotiating table to discuss the core
issues of the conflict, including the definition of
Transnistria's status within Moldova. To that end, we
welcome in particular Ambassador Remler's report that
President Voronin plans to share his ideas on a settlement -
which we consider even-handed and thoughtful - with
Transnistrian authorities. A settlement respecting Moldova's
independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity must be
the goal of all our efforts.

It is also our hope that participants will take practical
steps to build confidence and clear the way for a final
resolution of the conflict. Toward that end, we hope to see
working groups identify specific means of improving
cooperation and communication between the two sides. This
month President Voronin proposed that the sides destroy all
offensive military equipment, a constructive proposal that
would build confidence across the Nistru River and contribute
to a peaceful and secure Moldova. We also hope to see
progress on the withdrawal of Russian munitions from the
Transnistrian region of Moldova. This is, of course, an
important practical aspect of the broader commitment Russia
made at Istanbul on the withdrawal of its forces. The OSCE
Mission to Moldova is well placed to facilitate forward
movement on this commitment, while also ensuring both sides
continue to exercise restraint.

As Ambassador Remler noted, the OSCE Mission to Moldova is
also ideally suited to provide advice and expertise on issues
of democratic development, especially as Moldova's
parliamentary elections approach. We welcome the Mission's
efforts to help Moldova ensure that its electoral process and
the overall electoral environment uphold OSCE principles and
commitments, and commend the Mission's efforts to help
Moldova broaden media access and guarantee freedom of
assembly.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, the United States commends the

Mission's dedication to helping government authorities and civil society build capacity to fight trafficking in human beings, one of the most serious problems Moldova faces today.

In conclusion, let me say the United States continues to support the activities of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, and congratulates Ambassador Remler and his staff for their excellent work. We look forward to real progress in efforts to resolve the Transnistria conflict and further Moldova's democratic transformation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

End text.
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